

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A process for making low ester pectin comprising the steps of: obtaining a starting pectin material, contacting the starting pectin material with a bio-catalyst capable of de-esterifying the starting pectin material, permitting the bio-catalyst to de-esterify the starting pectin material to produce a de-esterified pectin, and further de-esterifying said de-esterified pectin by contacting the de-esterified pectin with an acid or an alkali capable of de-esterifying and permitting the acid or alkali to further de-esterify said de-esterified pectin to produce a low ester pectin, wherein the de-esterified pectin under or after said further de-esterification optionally is amidated by contacting said de-esterified pectin with ammonia.
2. (Original) The process according to claim 1 wherein the bio-catalyst is permitted to de-esterify the starting pectin material to a degree of esterification below 60% before further de-esterifying said de-esterified pectin.
3. (Original) The process according to claim 1 wherein the bio-catalyst is permitted to de-esterify the starting pectin material to a degree of esterification between 60% and 30% before further de-esterifying said de-esterified pectin.
4. (Original) The process according to claim 1 wherein the bio-catalyst is permitted to de-esterify the starting pectin material to a degree of esterification between 45% and 30% before further de-esterifying said de-esterified pectin.
5. (Original) The process according to claim 1 wherein the bio-catalyst is permitted to de-esterify the starting pectin material to a degree of esterification between 45% and 40% before further de-esterifying said de-esterified pectin.

6. (Original) The process according to claim 1 wherein the bio-catalyst is permitted to de-esterify the starting pectin material to a degree of esterification of 42% before further de-esterifying said de-esterified pectin.

7. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 1 [[-6]] characterized in that the bio-catalyst is selected from the group comprising pectin methyl esterase (E.C. 3.1.1.11).

8. (Original) The process according to claim 7 characterized in that the pectin methyl esterase (E.C.3.1.1.11) de-esterifies in a random way.

9. (Original) The process according to claim 7 characterized in that the pectin methyl esterase (E.C.3.1.1.11) de-esterifies in a block-wise way.

10. (Currently Amended) The process according to claims 1 [[-9]], wherein the biocatalyst de-esterified pectin material is further de-esterified with an acid and subsequently amidated by contacting said de-esterified pectin with ammonia.

11. (Currently Amended) The process according to claims 1 [[-9]], characterized in that the biocatalyst de-esterified pectin is further de-esterified by contacting the de-esterified pectin with ammonia and permitting the ammonia to further de-esterify said de-esterified pectin to produce an amidated pectin.

12. (Currently Amended) An amidated pectin obtainable from a process according to claim 10 ~~or 11~~, characterized by having a ratio, R_2 , of intrinsic viscosity of the starting de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.01 to 1.25.

13. (Original) The amidated pectin according to claim 12, characterized by having a ratio, R_2 , of intrinsic viscosity of the starting de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.03 to 1.18

14. (Original) The amidated pectin according to claim 12, characterised by having a ratio, R_2 , of intrinsic viscosity of the starting de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.04 to 1.15.

15. (Original) The amidated pectin according to claim 12 characterized by having a degree of esterification of 30% or less and a degree of amidation of 18% or less.

16. (Original) The amidated pectin according to claim 12, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 10-20% and a degree of amidation of 10-20%.

17. (Original) The amidated pectin according to claim 12, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 12-18% and a degree of amidation of 5-30%.

18. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin obtainable from a process according to claims 1 [[- 11]], characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, “a”, above 0.8.

19. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin obtainable from a process according to claims 1 [[- 11]], characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, “a”, in the range 0.8 – 1.0.

20. (Currently Amended) The amidated pectin obtainable from a process according to claims 1 [[- 11]], characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, “a”, in the range 0.85 – 0.95.

21. (Currently Amended) The use of an amidated pectin according to claims 12 [[- 20]] in foodstuffs.

22. (Currently Amended) The use of an amidated pectin according to claims 12 [[- 20]] in jams and jellies.

23. (Currently Amended) The use of an amidated pectin according to claims 12 [[- 20]] in dairy products.

24. (Currently Amended) The use of an amidated pectin according to claims 12 [[- 20]] in pharmaceutical products.

25. (Currently Amended) The use of an amidated pectin according to claims 12 [[- 20]] in personal care products.

26. (Currently Amended) The use of an amidated pectin according to claims 12 [[- 20]] in household products.